

## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

LITTLE GULL *LARUS MINUTUS* AT LAKE TURKANA: A NEW BIRD FOR KENYA On 7 January 1979, just north of Loiengalani (2°46'N., 36°43'E.) on the eastern side of Lake Turkana, I saw a group of about 60 Little Gulls *Larus minutus*. The Little Gulls were close in to the shore and were taking food in flight from the surface of the water. I was able to compare them with other larids present, namely at least 250 White-winged Black Terns *Chlidonias leucopterus*, about 50 Gull-billed Terns *Gelochelidon nilotica*, 14 Caspian Terns *Sterna caspia*, 12 Lesser Black-backed Gulls *Larus fuscus* and about 45 Grey-headed Gulls *L. cirrocephalus*. The Little Gulls were small, not much larger than the White-winged Black Terns, with rounded wings, greyish-black bill and legs, pale head with dark grey on the crown and a blackish spot behind the eye. About half the birds were adult with wings pigeon-grey above with white tips and black under the wings. Most were in winter plumage but five or six were already assuming breeding plumage with black heads and red legs and bills. The rest of the group were immature with dark zigzag bands across the wings above, a black band at the end of the tail and light underwings. An intensive search of the area next day failed to reveal the Little Gulls. I am very familiar with the species in Europe where I have observed it breeding as well as on migration and during the winter.

The Little Gull is not recorded for the Ethiopian region by White (1965) but the Lake Turkana sighting appears to be the fifth record for sub-Saharan Africa (see Orel, 1974) and the first for the eastern side of the continent. The previous records are from Sierra Leone (8½°N.), Nigeria, two records (6½°N.) and Angola (12°S.).

## REFERENCE

OREL, G.J. 1974. Little Gull *Larus minutus* south of the Sahara. *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 94:176.

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SOME NESTING DATA ON THE NYANZA SWIFT *APUS NYANZAE* There is little information in the literature concerning nesting habits of African swifts. Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1957) state that *Apus nyanzae* "nest in crevices of cliffs and chinks in rocks using mud to enclose a small crevice. Nest lined with straw and feathers. Eggs one or two, white; no measurements available." According to Dr E.K. Urban (quoted by Brooke 1971), *nyanzae* breeds freely in old buildings in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The discovery of nests of this species in two air vents in my house in Nakuru provided a unique opportunity to gather nesting data.

The nests were found on 9 September 1977 after closer inspection of the vents which had been used for several months as roosting sites by Nyanza Swifts. Each nest was located in a horizontal vent approximately 10m above ground level, facing west. The house was 1900m above sea level. The two vents are 6m apart in two separate first floor rooms. The vents are identical in size and structure: stone-walled, they are 17cm high, and 16 x 13cm in length and width. The entrance to each vent is partially occluded by two small vertical concrete pillars. Direct observation into each vent is possible through a fine mesh screen from within each